

Heartsease  
Hillsboro  
North Carolina

Orange Co

(BURKE - HEARTT HOUSE)

HABS No. NC-159

HABS  
N.C.

68 - HILLSO

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PHOTOGRAPHS

~~WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA~~  
North Carolina District

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

Addendum to  
Heartsease  
(Burke-Heartt House )  
113 E. Queen St.  
Hillsborough  
Orange County  
North Carolina

HABS No. NC-159

HABS  
NC,  
68-HILL-9  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Historic American Buildings Survey

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68-411  
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Name of Structure: Heartsease (also called Burke-Heartt House)  
(Lot 62)

Address: 113 East Queen St., Hillsborough, Orange County, North Carolina (Lot No. 62)

Present Owner: Miss Rebecca B. Wall  
113 E. Queen St.  
Hillsborough, N. C.

Present Occupant: Miss Rebecca B. Wall  
113 E. Queen St.  
Hillsborough, N. C.

Present Use: Private home.

Brief Statement of Significance: Firmly entrenched local tradition says that the State's third governor, Thomas Burke, lived in this house before the Revolution. This house was said to be his "town house" while Tyaquin, a plantation  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mi. northeast of Hillsborough (where Burke is buried), was his country residence. He is said to have been captured on the front steps of Heartsease on the foggy morning of Sept. 12, 1781, by David Fanning's band of Tories. Miss Mary W. ("Polly") Burke, daughter of Governor Burke, owned Heartsease from 1810 to 1837 when she sold it to the Heartt family who gave it its name. It was the home of Dennis Heartt, famous editor of the influential Hillsborough Recorder, for many years and still (in 1963) belongs to a relative of the Heartt family. One of North Carolina's most famous houses.

Date of Erection: Central portion probably ca. 1772; east wing probably after 1810; west wing probably after 1837.

Architect: None. Evolved gradually.

Builder, suppliers, etc. Thomas Burke probably built the central portion. Miss Mary W. Burke may have added the east wing; the Heartts, the west wing.

Original Plan, Construction, etc.

Original house was the central portion consisting of two equal rooms with a loft overhead. This probably was the house mentioned in the first deed and may well have been built by Thomas Burke ca. 1772. The Sauthier map of Hillsborough, drawn in October, 1768, shows no structure of any kind on Lot 62. The original house (the living-room and hall) is clearly visible today. The original random width pine flooring has not been replaced, nor have the windows, exterior horizontal planking, etc.

Physical History:

Original and Subsequent Owners:

1. Aug. 15, 1786 (Deed Book 3, 164-165) - Town Commissioners sell Lot 62 to Sterling Harris for 20 shillings. Houses and orchards are specifically mentioned, and the central portion of Heartsease probably stood here in 1786. The price, however, is that of an undeveloped lot.
2. June 5, 1810 (DB 13,455) - Sterling Harris 24 years later sells Lot 62 for \$400 to Miss Mary W. ("Polly") Burke, Governor Thomas Burke's daughter and only child.

3. Nov. 6, 1817 (DB 16,149) - James Webb sells to Mary W. Burke 25' of Lot 63 adjoining her Lot 62 on the east for \$25.00.
4. (Feb.)\_\_\_\_, 1832 (DB 25,63) - Mary W. Burke sells house and lot to George M. Johnston and "Eliza his wife" for \$1.00. Mentions outside kitchen. Reserves one room in house.
5. July 30, 1833 (DB 26,66) - George M. Johnston releases to Mary W. Burke all right and claim to Lot 62....for \$1.00.
6. May 4, 1837 (DB 27,361) - James M. Webb, attorney for Mary W. Burke sells Lot 62 and 25' of Lot 63 to Caroline and Henrietta Heartt of Hillsborough for \$750.
7. May 4, 1837 (DB 27,360) - Caroline and Henrietta Heartt sell 25' of Lot 63 to James Webb for \$1.00.
8. April 16, 1884 (Will Book H, 349-350) - Will of Henrietta M. Heartt dated Sept. 19, 1881 leaves Heartsease and all other property to her sister Caroline E. Heartt as life tenant, then to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Alice E. Heartt, and after her death to her children Edwin M., Mrs. Mary E. Bragg, and Alice C. Heartt.
9. April 16, 1884 (Will Book H, 351) - Will of Caroline E. Heartt, dated Sept. 19, 1881, identical with Henrietta M. Heartt's will.
10. Heartsease passed successively to Mrs. Alice E. Heartt, then to Edwin M. and Mollie H. Heartt. Miss Alice C. Heartt kept school in a small schoolhouse to the rear.
11. William Alexander Heartt, son of Edwin M. and Mollie H. Heartt, inherited Heartsease. Wm. A. Heartt married Sarah Wallace Wall.
12. Feb. 11, 1946 (Will Book M, 133) - Will of William Alexander Heartt dated May 28, 1927, leaves Heartsease to his wife, Sarah Wall Heartt.
13. April 26, 1951 (Will Book M, 453) - Will of Sarah Wall Heartt, dated Nov. 8, 1938, with codicil Aug. 11, 1944, devises Heartsease to her mother Annie C. Wall and her sister Rebecca B. Wall and after their deaths to Victor S. Bryant, Sr., of Durham and then to his children.
14. Heartsease is now (Nov., 1963) the property of Miss Rebecca B. Wall.

Notes on Alterations and Additions:

The single story east wing seems to be somewhat earlier than the tall west wing. No records have been kept, but it seems likely that Mary W. Burke added the east wing, extended the roof and added the three tiny dormers and that the Heartts added the west wing (which has been recently estimated as having been built in the 1830's.) The "shed room" at the rear and the present kitchen were added by recent owners (the "shed room" is an enclosed porch).

The dividing wall in the original portion of the house has been shifted to make a hall and a large living-room of what was originally two equal rooms. No alterations or additions have been made in flooring, moldings, alcoves, windows, dormers, etc. The outside kitchen and Miss Alice Heartt's Schoolhouse are gone.

Historical Events Connected with Structure: Governor Thomas Burke is said to have built the original, central portion of the house and to have lived there. He is said to have been captured on the front steps of this house by a Tory band on Sept. 12, 1781. (A Colonial Dames' plaque on the house commemorates these events.) His daughter, Miss Mary Williams ("Polly") Burke, mistress of "Miss Polly Burke's School", owned the house for 27 years and probably enlarged and altered it.

The famous newspaper editor, Dennis Heartt, who gave the house its name, permitted his apprentices to live in a tiny attic room (now pointed out as "the apprentices' room"). Most famous of these apprentices was W. W. Holden who became Governor of North Carolina.

Important Old Views: A view of Heartsease in an unpainted, run-down state, probably in (Location) the early 1900's (in the files of the Hillsborough Historical Society).

Sources of Information: (1) Deed Books and Will Books of Orange County in Orange County (With Location) Courthouse, Hillsborough, N. C.; (2) C. J. Sauthier's 1768 map of Hillsborough; (3) Interview with Miss Rebecca B. Wall, present owner; (4) Frances Benjamin Johnston and Thomas Tileston Waterman, The Early Architecture of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. C. Press, 1941, 1947), p. 64 (described and illustrated). (5) Archibald Henderson and Bayard Wooten, Old Houses and Gardens of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. C. Press, 1939), Plate 53 (illustrated and discussed).